

Testimony of

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Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

It's hard to attract people to our profession when there are constant stories in the news of teachers and staff being physically and verbally attacked, school shootings, and the public questioning and challenging our pedagogical practices. An Educator Bill of Rights would be a great step in protecting the rights of teachers and ensuring that they can do their job with less fear for their daily safety. I also believe in the Covid Benefit Enhancement. Teachers were designated as essential workers and returned to classrooms full of students with the constant risk and concern of catching Covid and of exposing their families to the disease. Many other professions didn't return to their offices and risk potential infection for months to a year later while we taught through it. We worked hard to help students process their anxiety about Covid and to keep them safe while processing our own fear and anxiety. In addition, teachers had to completely adjust their teaching practices to teach virtually and then again to teach students who were in person while simultaneously teaching students who were at home. Many additional hours outside of our contractual hours went into ensuring we could provide students with the best possible educational experience given the circumstances. Finally, we have been working tirelessly to help students learn at a faster rate to reduce the learning regression that took place due to the disruption of sound educational practices due to Covid. I know many teachers are burned out and are leaving the profession earlier than they intended. With the shortage of new educators, their positions are difficult to fill. This provided benefit might encourage teachers who are considering leaving the profession to remain longer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

